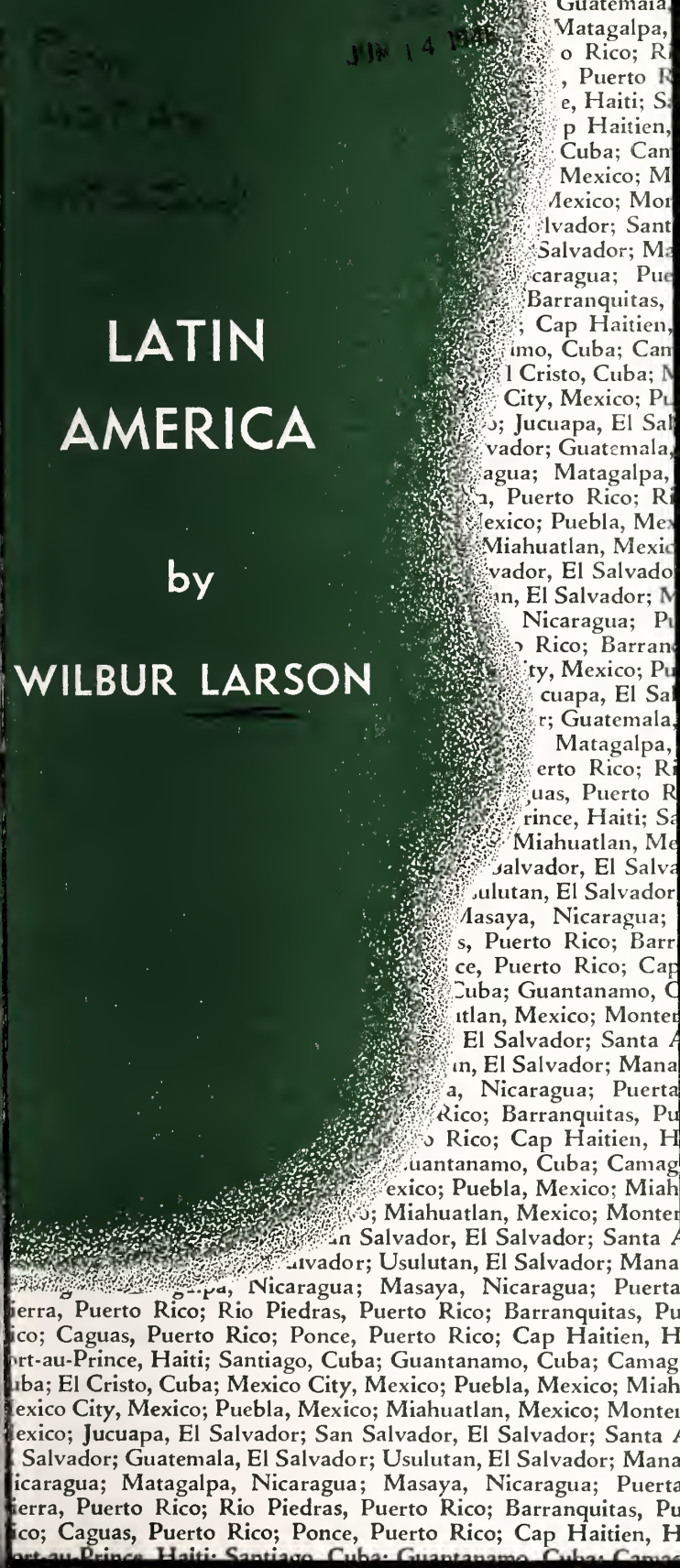


LATIN AMERICA

by

WILBUR LARSON

JUN 14 1945



Guatemala; Matagalpa, o Rico; R, Puerto R e, Haiti; S p Haitien, Cuba; Can Mexico; M Mexico; Mor lvador; Sant Salvador; Ma caragua; Pue Barranquitas, Cap Haitien, mo, Cuba; Can l Cristo, Cuba; M City, Mexico; Pu o; Jucuapa, El Sal vador; Guatemala, agua; Matagalpa, a, Puerto Rico; R exico; Puebla, Mex Miahuatlan, Mexic vador, El Salvador an, El Salvador; M Nicaragua; Pu o Rico; Barran y, Mexico; Pu cuapa, El Sal r; Guatemala, Matagalpa, erto Rico; R uas, Puerto R rince, Haiti; Sa Miahuatlan, Me salvador, El Salva ulutan, El Salvador Masaya, Nicaragua; s, Puerto Rico; Barr ce, Puerto Rico; Cap Cuba; Guantanamo, C itlan, Mexico; Monter El Salvador; Santa A n, El Salvador; Mana a, Nicaragua; Puerta Rico; Barranquitas, Pu o Rico; Cap Haitien, H uantanamo, Cuba; Camag exico; Puebla, Mexico; Miah uo; Miahuatlan, Mexico; Monter an Salvador, El Salvador; Santa A vador; Usulután, El Salvador; Mana a, Nicaragua; Masaya, Nicaragua; Puerta ierra, Puerto Rico; Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico; Barranquitas, Pu ico; Caguas, Puerto Rico; Ponce, Puerto Rico; Cap Haitien, H ort-au-Prince, Haiti; Santiago, Cuba; Guantanamo, Cuba; Camag uba; El Cristo, Cuba; Mexico City, Mexico; Puebla, Mexico; Miah Mexico City, Mexico; Puebla, Mexico; Miahuatlan, Mexico; Monter exico; Jucuapa, El Salvador; San Salvador, El Salvador; Santa A Salvador; Guatemala, El Salvador; Usulután, El Salvador; Mana ica, Nicaragua; Masaya, Nicaragua; Puerta ierra, Puerto Rico; Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico; Barranquitas, Pu ico; Caguas, Puerto Rico; Ponce, Puerto Rico; Cap Haitien, H ort-au-Prince, Haiti; Santiago, Cuba; Guantanamo, Cuba; Camag



NORTH AMERICA and the neighboring islands make up the territorial working ground of Home Missions. Latin American home mission work for Northern Baptists includes Puerto Rico, Haiti, Cuba, Mexico, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. In these lands there are over 30,000,000 people and about one of every thousand is a member of a Baptist church. There are probably only 300,000 Protestants in all these countries.

After a long history of Roman Catholic domination, including centuries when no other faith was allowed to be preached, most of the people of European background are nominally Roman Catholic and great numbers of the Indian and Negro population as well. Some people question the propriety of Protestant missions in so-called Catholic countries. But one finds destitution, misery and, worst of all, ignorance and superstition where there are many rich churches. The great unmet needs, most of all for the preaching of a gospel unknown in these supposedly Christian lands, are the justification for Protestant missions.

● Evangelism is the principal method and the result of our mission enterprise. That is, the work is begun with evangelism and it continues and grows through evangelism. Haiti presents some of the most interesting illustrations of this. In the capital, Port-au-Prince, there is a Baptist church. Some 18 years ago the congregation there was a small one, perhaps 50 people, meeting in an old, delapidated structure. At that time a young Haitian minister, trained in the United States, became pastor. Under his leadership the church has grown to a membership of 1700. There were 277 baptisms last year. The work is not all carried on by the pastor nor in the principal congregation. There are 33 out-stations. The pastor cannot visit all of these often and yet the work goes on regularly under the leadership of laymen. Similar stories could be told of the work in other countries. "To catch the evangelical enthusiasm of the National is a soul stirring experience," said a missionary to Mexico recently. "The nationals of Mexico do not need a special Crusade of Evangelism to make them enthusiastic about their task of spreading the gospel. They have a Crusade for Evangelism every day."

Usually there is a North American on each national field in general missionary work. He needs to go with full college and seminary training. He counsels with the pastors, helps to open new work, and often teaches in a seminary. Other workers need full medical or nursing training, or preparation and experience in teaching or school administration. Spanish is used on all the fields except Haiti, where French is used.

● Schools have been an instrument of missionary activities. Through these institutions worthy young people, who would otherwise have no opportunity, are given a chance to secure an education. So a girl from an insignificant village becomes an outstanding educator or a boy from the streets of the city, a pastor of a great church.

It is not easy for young professing Christians of the Baptist faith to attend the public schools in these

Catholic dominated countries. They meet persecution for their faith. Ministerial students often find it necessary to move to another community because their homes are stoned or burned. In Mexico religious instructions must be given in a church building. Many North American teachers have served and are serving in this educational ministry.

● The ministry of healing is another part of home missions in Latin America. In Managua, Nicaragua, one finds the Evelyn Briggs Cranska Memorial Hospital. A North American doctor and North American nurses form part of its staff. This institution is in the midst of a program of expansion which will include the addition of a new wing to the present building and the erection of a complete new hospital. In a great convention of Baptists in Nicaragua it was found that more than half of the congregation were first brought to evangelical teaching through the hospital.

A great contribution at the present time is made through the training of nurses in a school recently established in this Managua hospital. The nursing profession had been practically unknown in Nicaragua. Now one of the first graduates of this school is Chief Nurse in the new National School for Nursing, with responsibility for teaching, making schedules, and supervising nursing procedures.

Clinics in outlying districts are an important phase of Baptist medical work. Although the need for medical service cannot be met adequately with the limited number of nurses and doctors and the facilities available in hospitals, these Christian physicians work long hours to alleviate disease and pain.

● Still other missionaries designated as Evangelistic missionaries go into areas far from the city and carry on work under difficult conditions. They identify themselves with the people, live where they live and preach the gospel through their lives as well as in words. This means separation from friends, few opportunities for stimulating contacts, and work in primitive surroundings where the need is compelling. With all the other difficulties the missionaries everywhere must work with entirely inadequate funds, as compared with the home churches.

Recently a minister was visiting a brother pastor in his church, and as they walked into the church sanctuary the host exclaimed about the pleasure of his people when they had been able to purchase a beautiful stained glass window for only \$25,000.

"Do you realize that the cost of that one window would pay all the Mission contribution to the Baptist work in Mexico for a year?" inquired the other. It would pay the salary of the pastors, the summer assembly allotment, the seminary budget, the price of all the literature, the salary of the doctors and the clinic in Monterrey. It would also pay for the Northern Baptist share in rural work in Mexico. One-half of this country of Mexico is the responsibility of Northern Baptists. They find that their budget allows only the cost of one stained glass window in a church at home, \$25,000, to carry on this work.

● Latin American Baptists are making strenuous efforts toward self-support. They are making progress in spite of the fact that their basic incomes are low. Moreover, their evangelistic enthusiasm leads them to establish more and more work so their budget continues upwards. They should have increased sympathetic cooperation from Northern Baptists.



LATIN AMERICA is waking up. While parts of it have been free of European rule for a century or more, nevertheless, progress has been slow. Now there are great progressive movements in many of these lands. Some can be traced directly to the influence of Missions so that the Protestant witness has had a hand in the shaping of these countries. But varied influences are at work there as in other parts of the world. Many people find themselves in a spiritual vacuum as they throw off their faith in the Roman Catholic Church and emerge with a practical paganism. Communism with its active atheism is spreading rapidly in Latin American countries. There is also an aggressive activity in the Roman Catholic Church which expresses itself at one extreme in the fanatical persecution of the Protestants and at the other in the ministry of well trained American priests who find themselves in the strange position of going as missionaries to a supposedly Roman Catholic country.

The evangelical church is growing and maturing. It is becoming indigenous. This has been evidenced in a striking way only recently. There is at present a great influx of Puerto Ricans into the city of New York. With little encouragement from local churches the Puerto Rican Christians have formed their own congregations. They have brought with them from Puerto Rico their own way of living, which included an evangelical church. They have their own Puerto Rican pastors and in many cases carry on their activities with little help of any kind from the outside.

But the Protestant church in Latin America is still small. While it is growing larger and stronger constantly, it is still in need of help. There are opportunities to win individuals and even communities to the gospel, and to minister to their needs in the spirit of Christ. Young people who respond to these calls find they can give their best in a highly rewarding service.

Published for

THE AMERICAN BAPTIST HOME MISSION SOCIETY

and

WOMAN'S AMERICAN BAPTIST HOME MISSION SOCIETY

by the

COUNCIL ON FINANCE AND PROMOTION

OF THE NORTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

152 Madison Avenue, New York 16, N. Y.